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## Ethical qualities of the educator for a society humanly sustainable

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### Abstract

The observation of social reality shows that there is a large gap between the technical progress and human development. The technical means, not matter how high the levels of development can reach, should exercise the role that is properly theirs: as a tool for human and social development. It is thus necessary to redirect the terms of the related technical and human development progress since their functions are specific to each of them. Presupposes the availability, thus ethical qualities that enable those who manage, the wisdom in their decisions: commitment, responsibility, competence, initiative and dedication. This way, social development is achieved by educating the ethical qualities that a teacher should possess. It seeks to human development that in turn encourages the sustainability of society.

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### Introduction

Nowadays, the observation of social reality shows that there is a large gap between the technical progress and human development. While the first achieves a highly satisfactory levels and its progression seems no decay, the human development of the individuals who compose that society seems to meet the same expectations.

It is necessary to reconsider the functionality of the technical means, that is, to restore its true meaning. The technical means, not matter how high the levels of development can reach, should exercise the role that is properly theirs: as a tool for human development. Its progress becomes real sense channelled into their own purpose, to mediate social development.

That is how technical progress contributes to the level of social progress in which people are fulfilling as such, in its entire human dimension. We could say that there is a distortion of technical progress as it doesn't contemplate for human purpose. The consequences for society are obvious. The separation of technical progress and social human development leads us to not appreciate sufficiently the personalization of human work and the entire society (Rodríguez, Altajeros & Bernal, 2006). In short, we attend to a dehumanization of something exclusively human as it is work.

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It is then necessary to redirect the terms of the related technical and human development progress since their functions are specific to each. This would be to take the means (technical progress) and goals (social development) in the best way, i.e., the one that gives everyone the right place where it belongs. The purpose is to sort them up in the most convenient way for them, which is proper and intended to serve man.

This discussion culminates in sending what should only be performed by the man, acting as the educator. Thus, an ethical order of things require the exact knowledge of the place they should occupy the same, making them available to man and society. Presupposes the availability, this way, some ethical qualities that enable those who manage, the wisdom in their decisions: commitment, responsibility, competence, initiative and dedication.

Thereby, social development is achieved by educating the ethical qualities that a teacher should have, facilitating the natural knowledge of things while arranging them making them available. It seeks to human development that in turn encourages the sustainability of society.

## 1. The means, phishers of purposes

Ethics is not other thing that the practical wisdom born of the consideration of human action from the teleological perspective. If the intentionally purpose is ignored, or unconsciously forgotten, the result is not only the loss of ethics and the sad realization that in the concept of quality of life, ethic seems to have vanished. There is another result, unintended but inevitable: the mismanagement and lack of control of the means that leads to uncertainty about the effects of science and technology. There is no doubt about the most beneficial effects of scientific and technological development, but neither can be claim that they are the only ones, and that there are other effects that carry a disturbing degree of risk and danger to humanity

It is known the diagnosis J. Maritain (1969, 17) about the root of the crisis and problems of contemporary education: the impersonation of the purposes by the means. But decades before when it was not obvious as this situation today, it was denounced by M. Heidegger respect to the culture in his existential analysis of being on hand, that is for him the conceptualization of the technique. Called the attention of Heidegger (1974: 81) on the relational nature of the useful –analogously of the mean–: “a useful is not, strictly taken, ever. To the useful it is always inherent everything that can be useful as it is. A useful is essentially 'something for ...›”. A means is always more or less directly linked to a purpose, but the warning of Heidegger is more worldly: a mean is not or exist ever isolated, but within a reference set of a plexus of means that gives immediate operational sense. The example given by Heidegger (1974, 81) is somehow musty, his work *Being and Time* was published in 1927 - but still illustrative: “toothpick, pen, ink, paper, folder, desk, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room”.

Human action is constituted from their intended purpose and is done through the means provided, but in turn, these means are also articulated with each other according to a teleological reference. When the purpose is diluted in practical reason or forgotten in the action, the sense of the means is lost, because that sense is nothing but the order at least. “The means, in increasing numbers, are disadvantaged from any direction to a purpose. That is the equivalent of saying that the means “denature”, begin to gravitate themselves and impose their own system outside the functional purposes. In other words: the means override the purposes” (Polo 1996a, 182). Such is the current situation that can be described as one where the subject ends up being a victim of the environment that generates.

This loss of sense of means takes place by shifting the entire purpose or the plexus of means that begins to grow disproportionately to base its meaning in itself, in all the means closely linked. It is a fact that literature and films have dealt extensively with this situation in the genre called science fiction, the narrative arguments can be fabulous, but the message and the expressive meaning is a valid intuition: rebellion and tyranny of machines (means) on the man will not perform materially as told in novels and films, but is palpable the reality of the human abdication before the might and the uncontrolled growth of the means. We have a privileged example in an ominous fact: the cloning of human embryos ... with therapeutic purposes. The plexus of means, in this case scientific and technical, is justified in itself, in its autonomous development, promising the healing benefits to some individuals though it has to be at the expense of the annihilation of others.

## 2. The government of the means from the purposes: happiness

The means are such to the extent they are for a purpose. In turn, the purposes are plural, but as referring to a final target, which content or meaning material can be discussed, and in fact is being discussed since the dawn of history,

but whose formal character as an integrator of the plural purposes is irrefutable, even if it is only understood as "encompassing horizon for particular purposes" (del Barco 1991, 15).

Human life would lack coherence and continuity in its practical dimension if there was no all-encompassing purpose that could account for all goals and targets close to the actions. Human performance would be a rhapsody scattered of acts if so, if every time and situation trends and desires are justified and explained by a fortuitous and casual attraction. Not only would be impossible a practical rationality: the same freedom would be a delusion, because it can only be conceived through conscious awareness- though incomplete- but the active not always and completely straight - of the final purpose, to know and want to support the free choice of means.

From his perspective, the final purpose can not be obviously the well-being, which would only be a good or a particular purpose, but also with a certain characteristic of encompassing horizon of material goods, hence the confusion of utilitarian ethics (Bentham 1948). It can not be so for a reason, the experience of freedom: the pursuit of welfare, if it had an absolute sense, it would make to depend on the exercise of freedom of material goods available or the presence of favourable environmental circumstances. If understood this way, if happiness were actually reduced for the achievement of well-being (Nussbaum & Sen 1993), by giving it a final purpose, it would make no sense to speak truthfully of a successful life, which is the hallmark of happiness (Spaemann 1991, 107).

Moreover, the performance aimed to the achievement of pseudo-happiness that is the welfare could only be designed and implemented as a modifying or transforming activity of the material and environmental conditions that would lead, for example, to an increase of the production of consumer goods and a better distribution of the same to the greatest number of individuals. But happiness is not the result of a *poiesis*, of a "production" but a full practice, of 'transaction' "(Spaemann 1991, 59). The productive activities of the material conditions of existence are an effect rather than a cause of full and complete act of a human being that is happiness (Altarejos and Naval 2004). Therein lies the government of means, the sense donation that the final purpose of happiness gives them, thus forming them as useful and enjoyable assets.

### 3. Ethical qualities of the educator

The "lifelong learning" approach is in accordance with the achievement of objectives that the knowledge society demands (Kelly & Bite, 2001; McLaughlin, 2005). Bently (1998) argues that the key resources for the generation of wealth for the future will be ideas, knowledge and creativity, not the land, labour and physical materials of the past. In this perspective, the task is to increase individual responsibility for learning, with the aim of developing the competences that will allow each citizen to achieve lifelong employability in a dynamic and changing world (Smith & Spurling, 1999, Prahalad & Hamel, 1990, Spencer and Spencer, 1993). Ethical training may be considered as a key element in terms of individual responsibility for a lifelong employability development and its sustainability (Guillen, Fontrodona & Rodriguez, 2007).

We distinguish five characteristics that enable the human development while facilitating sustainable society (Altarejos 2003; Rodriguez Altarejos & Bernal 2006): competence, initiative, responsibility, commitment and dedication.

#### 3.1. Competition

Competence refers to the ability or capacity to resolve and address the problems of the work. "The competent person is not so just the one who knows and can do, but who knows how to act and do and can face practical problems in their complexity" (Altarejos 2003, 44). In the offering that makes the competence, the professional education takes over the interest and benefit of the other. Providing makes the knowledge available. His/her task is to assist, helping those in need by teaching them to seek, find and reach the truth. But such a search, find and achievement, can only be made by those who face the truth. The task of aid raises a mutual emotional relationship between teacher and student, which, although it is not the foundation itself, it is valuable and effective for the caring task. Through competence the imprint left by the teacher to the student is a very effective aid for the happy act (Altarejos & Naval 2004).

### 3.2 *Compromise*

The competence would not be possible without the personal commitment. The commitment can only be understood as an entirely personal act, in which each one gets involved in what he does, giving the action of a dimension that goes beyond what is stipulated. In addressing the other dimensions it is not possible to talk about them without referring to this characteristic. The commitment illuminates, enlightens and encourages other characteristics. From it is how we would speak of professional excellence. The commitment is to exceed the expectations presented by the objective dimension of work, surpassing the mere production efficiency and highlighting just the nature of care that accompanies the educator. "The superiority of the work in the subjective sense of work, in an objective sense of nature is teleological, implying that the act of work is composed of immanent operations and virtues, to which it owes its production efficiency. More precisely, the act of working is the channel of the higher forms to the possession and mastery of the material world. So the work is not merely a mechanical process "(Polo 1996b, 107).

### 3.3 *Initiative*

Under the compromise, the educator is in an innovative approach, to the extent that the commitment is unobjectionable and goes beyond a strict occupancy. From this perspective the initiative, innovation is not a condition of work, but a demand for those who work. The subjective dimension of work encourages this characteristic. The only way forward, innovate, it is with the input of the novelty of each in what they do (Spaemann 2006). So understood the task of the educator, rather than an obligation it is a vocation. A call that involves a response according to the personal commitment which goes beyond the simple task, the achievement of what was sought. In this endeavour is not in play only the work exerted, but the improvement of who does it. That is, the *praxis* and *poiesis* dimension of action (Nicomachean Ethics, 6, 4, 1140b.). Thus, one can say that in the teaching profession "no action is truly educational to pure *poiesis*-teaching," because in all educational activities, even one that ends in an outside work, there is a decision process in which the subject not only decides on the object but also about himself-it is the training aspect that leads to the educational performance "(Altarejos, Rodriguez, Fontrodona, 2007, 95).

### 3.4. *Dedication*

When referring to this characteristic we do it in the sense of offering, given or assignment. Dedication is more than dealing with something. The difference between commitment and occupation may be, on the one hand, the intensive involvement of the dedication and quality, while the occupation is an extensive and quantitative involvement. From this perspective, today it tends more to the occupation than the dedication. On the other, and from the perspective provided by the time the dedication highlights the full availability, while in the occupation are invested many hours and lack of availability, rising from one occupation to another. The dedication is intimately connected with help. See the other as a neighbour calls for a permanent attitude of openness to the emerging needs. The dedication is to be available to help and at all times enhance the action of another or others.

### 3.5 *Responsibility*

It is not possible to understand the characteristics mentioned above, if it is not from the perspective of "take over". The responsibility highlights the community character that comes with the relation. By "take over", the other matters to me as such and that way can be an "us" Donati (1998 & 1991). Then, the responsibility "implies an obligation, but not imposed by abstract instances and general codes of conduct, but welcomed by the subject who wants to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions on the one hand, and seeks to constantly improve such action on the other hand so that the consequences are increasingly beneficial for oneself and for others "(Altarejos 2003, 45-46). From the responsibility, the person feels impelled to a permanent and ongoing training to improve their competence, providing the initiative, making effective their dedication and strengthen its commitment. It is, therefore, the other face of freedom, of its increase. What directly affects human development and improves the

sustainability of society. It shows that the responsibility is a moral quality in itself. It is the basis and reason of being an educator.

According to the above characteristics, the educational task puts us squarely in the aim of education- the happy act-, highlighting how education is a matter of freedom. From this perspective, social development is achieved by educating the ethical qualities that a teacher should have facilitating the natural knowledge of things while arranging them, making them available and facilitating the social sustainability.

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